

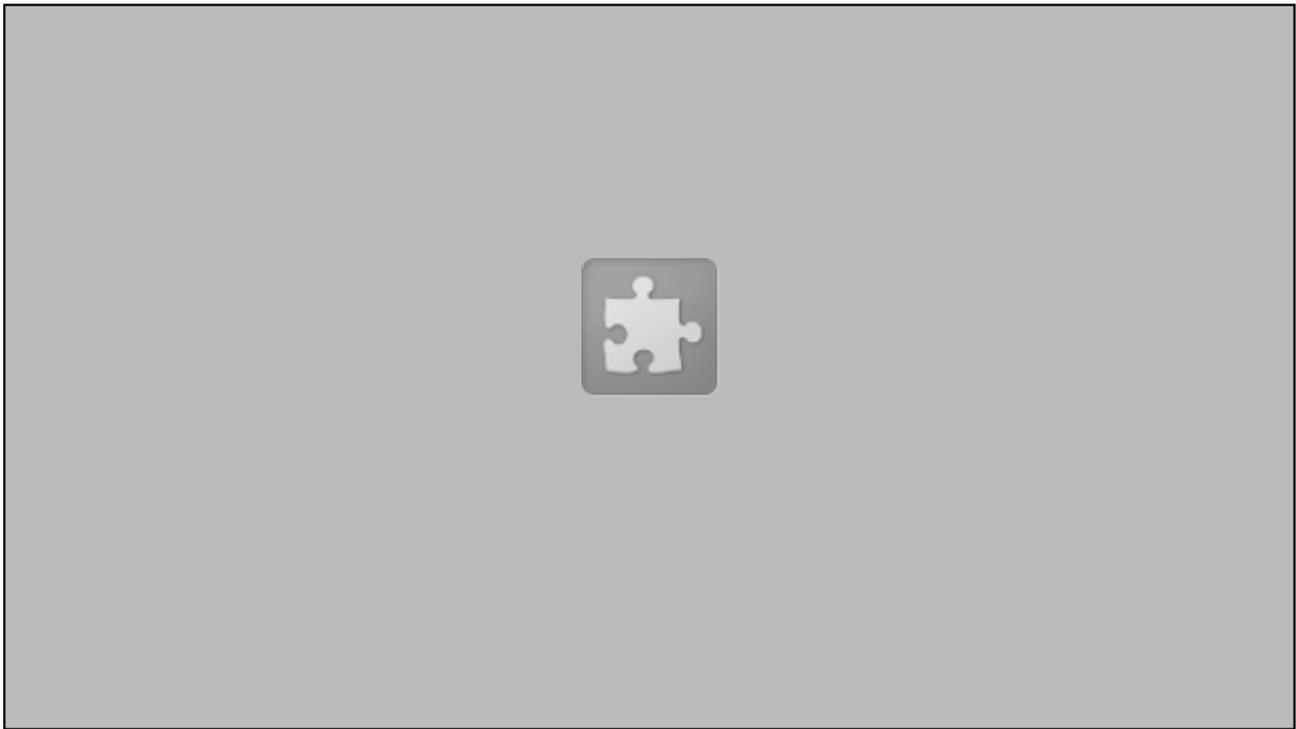
# Linking mental health resources to students

BY CAROLINE VINCENT | Published 20 hours ago | Updated 18 hours ago |

Studies are finding that more and more college students are struggling with mental illnesses during their time at school. According to a survey conducted by The Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors in 2012, in which The University of Alabama participated, 95 percent of counselors said students' mental health is becoming a growing concern among counseling centers on campus. The same survey found 70 percent of counseling directors to believe the number of students with mental illnesses had increased in the past year. It said anxiety is the main concern among 41.6 percent of students, followed by depression at 36.4 percent.

Many students turn to the Internet to try and seek help or raise awareness, however. The University of Alabama's online presence might not be enough to get students the help they need.

The Counseling Center has a website on which the Center's phone number, address and hours can be found. Its homepage also provides a link to a service called ULifeline, which gives students the ability to discuss their issues and seek help anonymously online. There is also much information about the different support groups offered through the Counseling Center. This information includes the time and place of the meetings, as well as the topics and leaders of the groups.



The UA Psychology Clinic does not provide a phone number on its website, but it does name the building's location and operating hours. It lists available services that mainly include evaluation and therapy, as well as what the clinic cannot provide. These unavailable services include treatment for patients who are suicidal, court-ordered evaluations and psychiatric medication or treatment, among others.

The Student Health Center has a web page about mental health, but it only addresses a few out of many issues. It lists symptoms and tips for adjustment issues, depression, sleep disorders, stress, anxiety, suicide and time management. No mention is made of eating disorders, bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, though all have been found to be common among college students according to a 2012 National Alliance on Mental Illness survey.

The list on the site of campus resources includes links to the UA Counseling Center; online mental health screenings, which students have to take through ULifeline and then print out the results in order to have a counseling appointment; the UA Psychology Clinic; the University Medical Clinic Psychiatry Clinic, which is a dead-end link; the UA Mental Health Strategic Health Team, which also turns into a page not found; and UA Mental Health Liaisons, which leads to a page that simply provides information about the roles of the liaisons with no contact or location information.

ActiveMinds.org is a website whose campaign focuses on "changing the conversation about mental health." The site is responsible for raising awareness and planning events through their chapters all around the country. Several chapters can be found within the state of Alabama, but not at the University. Auburn University, Bishop State Community College, Jacksonville State University, Samford University, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, The University of

Mobile, The University of Montevallo, The University of North Alabama and The University of South Alabama all have chapters, leaving The University of Alabama as one of the only major universities in the state to not have one.

Finding mental health help might not be as easy as students hope. There are multiple resources available to students, though accessing them requires a different level of effort.

However, there are groups on campus hoping to better the situation. The University's SGA is launching its campaign, Mental Health Awareness Week, Feb. 8. The organization will be hosting different events throughout the week in order to destigmatize the conversation and raise awareness of mental health on campus.